

News Release



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MSHA Approves Hand-Held Radios for Underground Mine Use

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has issued approval of two hand-held, portable radios for use in underground mines. These are the first two-way radios to be submitted to and approved by the agency in 10 years. The only other permissible radio currently being used underground hasn’t been sold by its manufacturer since 2004.

“MSHA’s approval of these two models fills a void that currently exists in underground mining,” said MSHA Acting Administrator David G. Dye. “It gives mine operators yet another option for communicating underground and ensuring the safety and well-being of their workers.”

The newly approved Kenwood Series 90 conventional transceivers offer up to 160 channels and operate on VHF (Model TK-290) or UHF (Model TK-390) frequencies. The units are powered by a rechargeable battery pack which attaches to the back of the radios to form part of the radio housing. The radios come with approved accessories including a speaker microphone, headset and earphone.

MSHA’s Approval and Certification Center tests a wide range of mining equipment, components, instruments and materials submitted by commercial manufacturers to ensure they meet government standards for safe design and construction. Once a product has been successfully tested and evaluated, a license is issued authorizing the manufacturer to produce and distribute its product for use in mines. The center is located in Triadelphia, W.Va.

Meanwhile, MSHA’s Emergency Communications and Tracking Technology Committee is expected to complete testing of new communication and tracking system technology at Consol Energy’s McElroy Mine in Marshall County, W.Va., next week.

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